

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

APRIL 7, 2016

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A.10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.

ROLL CALL:

Joren [A] Black [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [P] Mobus [P] Sopko [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Engineer Tom Herits, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 6 members of the public present

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Somerset County Department of Public Health and Safety – Credentialing Project / MOU
Chief William Stahl, Director; Bill Stephens, Mark Hudec

Administrator Tom Atkins said Chief Stahl of the Somerset County Department of Public Health and Safety had requested a postponement on the presentation. Mr. Atkins gave a brief explanation on some of the concerns regarding the credentialing project / MOU (Memo of Understanding), including but not limited to the language on arbitration and remediation, the cost to the Borough, and also why the County wants this program. He said the County would remove the language in question but require a clause indicating if there is a debate both the County and municipality would work together to amicably resolve same. There is no cost to the Borough and the County wants to do this because it is in the best interest of emergency preparedness. Councilman Gibbs said the Borough should make sure the local OEM is empowered to do what is necessary for our community.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs reported there was an Administration/Finance meeting on Monday, April 4th and the Committee continues the review of the health insurance to see if there are more feasible options. He said they are also discussing summer hours again and they may recommend it again, with slight modifications and this must be done by the May Council meeting. Councilman Gibbs said they are also in the process of reviewing the Watchung Arts Center Lease and may possibly make recommendations for potential change.

2. Police – Councilman Nehls said there was a meeting this week and the Capital Budget was discussed which, is part of the bond ordinance on tonight's agenda. He said Chief Cina was very diligent with his requests and his main concern is the possibility of the need to replace the current radios, if they are required to go off the band they have now. He said the cost could be half a million dollars or more. Councilman Nehls said there will be money set aside in the bond ordinance in the event new radios are required. Councilman Gibbs said there is possible federal legislation for reimbursement if municipalities are made to go off the current band.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported the Sunday wind storm resulted in many trees and wires down on Ridge Road which caused the road to be set on fire. This was just paved and Mr. Herits will see if there is any reimbursements possible for the repairs. Councilman Nehls said there is a resolution on the agenda tonight to start the next phase of the Library renovations, with the next step being getting diagrams and then estimated costs for this. The Public Works Committee also discussed, with Maser, work on remediation of the Ness property. There are two areas of concern; first the front area, Mountain Boulevard which is restricted because it is a wetland and there should be a Deed Notice on the property to restrict the area. The second area is at the rear of the property and Councilman Nehls suggests the Mayor and Council visit the site and have some input on the use of this area. This area could possibly be cleared of debris, Bob Burns is to get

an estimate of the cost, and there will be money in a bond ordinance for this cleanup. Councilman Nehls said there are buildings which must be taken down and some of these have asbestos which must be removed. The Borough must get approval from the Jewish Federation to use money from the escrow account. Councilman Mobus asked why there is money in a bond ordinance and Councilman Nehls explained money from the escrow account cannot be used for certain things like asbestos removal. Mr. Cruz said the cost for excavation would come from the escrow account. Mayor Pote said the Borough needs a time line and Councilman Nehls said he will get a work plan from Maser.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – Councilman Sopko reported there was a meeting on April 7th and most of the discussion was about the Ness property and what the Committee’s role will be. He said the Warren Planning Board is reviewing the Ness property for a major subdivision. Councilman Sopko said he would like to attend the Warren Planning Board meeting. Councilman Black mentioned there is a sewer issue if Warren goes forward with the subdivision.

Environmental – Councilman Sopko reported there was a meeting of the Commission on Monday evening. He said the Girl Scouts are requesting permission to plant a tree either at Best Lake or Spratford Park. Councilman Sopko said Operation Pride was not as well attended due to the weather conditions and he thanked Councilman Gibbs and his son for attending. He also said the Green Fair will be held on April 30th at Bayberry School and it will also include the shred event.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus reported there was a meeting last evening. He was not able to attend but Ms. Monetti gave him a reporting on the success of the Easter Egg Hunt. She also said the Commission discussed possible joint summer programs with the Youth Service Commission and recommendations for the Ness property including a dog park, skating rink (ice), and a soft play water park.

Historical – No report was submitted

Board of Health – Councilman Black said there was no report and the next meeting will be April 20th at 7:30 PM.

Councilman Black reported he attended the Green Brook Flood Control meeting last evening. He said the Army Corp of Engineers will be reviewing five possible plans for the upper basin and the New Providence gorge is the most likely. Mayor Pote said there has been resistance from the Connell group but it is still being considered.

5. Fire – Councilman Black reported there was a meeting Monday evening and Council President Joren, Councilmen Nehls, and Sopko attended. At the Committee meeting they prioritized the needs with the emphasis on the fire truck and the second would be the renovations to the firehouse. Councilman Nehls asked Mr. Herits to reach out to the architect to answer some questions and get the design.

6. Laws/Ordinances – No report was submitted.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer- Tom Herits reported the contractor on Knollwood is hoping to complete the project by the end of the month. He also reported we did get the grant, \$223,000. for Washington Drive. Mr. Herits said there is a DOT School grant – “safe routes to school”, federally funded. He said a procedure manual must be submitted to get approved and the DOT will pay for the design. If the Borough wants to pursue this the Board of Education must get involved. Mr. Herits said it is very competitive.

8. Police Chief – No report was submitted

9. Fire Department – No report was submitted

10. Rescue Squad – No report was submitted

11. Emergency Management – Mr. Atkins reported Mr. Greves attended a meeting at the County for details for submitting possible reimbursement for damage done by the Jonas storm. He said Mr. Greves said the submission has to be “tightened up” and resubmitted.

12. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had no report but there is one item for Executive Session this evening.

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reported the Little League Opening day parade and instructions. She said Mr. D J Hunsinger said if the event is rained out the ceremony will be at 12:30 Sunday with no parade. Ms. DeRocco also reminded all that Financial Disclosure Forms are due by April 30th and this year if you do not send them in there will be fines. The Green Fair will be held on April 30th at Bayberry

School from 10 AM to 1 PM and the shred event will be at the same location and start at 9 AM until 1 PM.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins reported there will be signs onsite for traffic flow at the Green Fair. He asked Mayor and Council if they will be meeting at the Ness Property on April 21 at 6 PM and all were in agreement with this. Mr. Cruz will work with Ms. DeRocco on the meeting notice.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No one from the public wished to be heard.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A Public Hearing on Ordinance OR:16/03 entitled “ **AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK WHEN THE COLA IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 2.5 PERCENT (N.J.S.A. 40a:4-45.14)**” was held. Councilman Gibbs moved a public hearing be held with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko “aye”.

With no one from the public wishing to be heard Councilman Gibbs closed the public hearing and moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye”

R1:04/07/16 Adoption of Ordinance OR:16/03 – Cap Bank

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

Approval of the following Council minutes:
March 12, 2016 Special Workshop Meeting
March 17, 2016 Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Board of Health Minutes – January 20, 2016
Youth Services Commission Minutes – May 26, 2015, February 23, 2016
Recreation Commission Minutes – February 9, 2016
Building Department Report – March, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #11 - Warren Township Planning Board 3/21/16 Notice of Public Hearing on major sub-division application /10 single family residential lots adjacent to Old Church Road c: M & C, TEA, TH, Pl. Board
- #12 - Watchung Planning Board 4/6/16 Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Amendment to the Master Plan entitled “Quarry Area Master Plan Amendment, April 2016 Borough of Watchung, Somerset County, New Jersey” c: M & C, TEA, TH

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

R2:04/07/16 Appointment to Fire Department / Junior Member – Kelly McKenna

R3: Purchases Over \$2,000. – Air Consulting Services (Air Quality Assess. / Borough Hall)
Treasurer – State of NJ (Annual Stormwater Discharge Permit)
Ditschman/Flemington Ford (PW Truck Ford F350)
Ditschman/Flemington Ford (PW Engine for Mason Dump)
Flemington Department Store (PW Apparel & Boots)

